

# TOWN MEETING NEWS

Camden, Maine May 2012

Camden's **2012 Annual Town Meeting** will be held June 12 and 13. Residents may *register to vote* at the Town Office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., until 4:30 p.m. on Tues. June 5, and at the polling place on Election Day. Please bring identification and proof of residency. Absentee ballots are available at the Town office during regular business hours noted above. The Town Meeting is an opportunity to have a voice in Camden's future.

## **Ballot Voting: Tuesday June 12, 2012**

The polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Camden Public safety Building. Voters will be asked to vote on Articles 1 through 3 of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

**Article 1:** Election of the moderator to preside at the Town Meeting. The polls will open as soon as the Moderator has been elected.

**Article 2:** Election of Select Board Members and School Directors by secret ballot:

- **Two Select Board members for 3-year terms.** In addition to serving on the Select Board, Select Board members also act as the Assessors, Overseers of the Poor, and Wastewater Commissioners. There are 6 candidates running for these 2 seats. Alphabetically they are: John French, John Lewis, Matthew Lewis, Leonard Lookner, Diane Robin McIntosh, and Mary Lowe Quinn.
- **Two Directors of the Maine School Administrative District (SAD) #28 / Community School District (CSD) #19 for 3-year terms.** There are 3 candidates running for these 2 seats. Alphabetically they are: Robert Lawson, Patricia Libby-Lincoln, and Christopher Richmond
- **One member for the Personnel Board for a 3-year term.** There are no nominees.

**Article 3:** **Proposed amendment to the Camden Zoning Ordinance.** This proposed amendment is to bring The Camden Zoning Ordinance in

compliance with the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC). Voters are asked to amend the Camden Zoning Ordinance to: (1) Include the definitions of Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) and "Building Official" and (2) Create a local authority to apply and enforce the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code. In Camden, that person will be the Town's Camden Code Enforcement Officer.

These amendments were recommended by the Planning Board (6-0) and certified by the Select Board Chair. The full text of the amendments are available at the Town Office.

## **BUSINESS MEETING June 13, 2012 at 7 pm:**

**Article 4 through 15,** which includes the proposed FY13 Budget, will be acted upon at the Business Meeting which takes place on Wednesday, June 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Camden Opera House. Please refer to the 2012 Annual Town Report for specific information about these articles and the budget on pages 89 through 95.

**Article 4.** The Town is milling and paving Belmont Avenue. This project includes replacement of a culvert. Due to requirements of the Army Corps of Engineers, in order to replace the culvert the Town needs to get easements from the four property owners who are abutters to the culvert. This Article asks voters to allow the Town to accept the easements from the four abutting property owners in order to do the culvert replacement.

**Articles 5 through 9 are annual housekeeping articles.** Article 5 sets the dates taxes are due (November 1 and May 1) and sets the interest rate for unpaid taxes at 7%. Article 6 authorizes the Select Board to apply for and accept grants, gifts, etc. on behalf of the Town; Article 7 authorizes the Select Board to dispose of tax-acquired property. Article 8 authorizes the disposal of personal property in accordance with the Town's purchasing policy. Article 9 authorizes the Select Board to transfer funds between budget categories in accordance with guidelines.

**Article 10.** This Article pertains to the revenue side of the proposed FY 13 Budget and appropriates non-property tax revenues which reduce the amount of property taxes that need to be committed. The non-property tax revenues include: State funds such as local road assistance, revenue sharing, tree growth reimbursement, vehicle excise taxes, and local fees such as building permits and plumbing fees.

Although there are signs of an improving economy, some revenues remain low, such as excise taxes and building permits, which is directly related to the economy. The estimated non-property tax revenue for FY13 is \$2,044,450.

**Article 11.** This article contains the Budget expenditures proposed for FY13. If approved, along with the designation of revenues in Article 9, the 2012-2013 budget represents less than a 1% increase in the estimated municipal tax. The projection is based in an estimated total assessed value. This Budget is for the municipal budget only. The proposed budget falls within the guidelines of Maine's property tax growth limitation law known as LD 1 (Please see Article 12).

This Budget was developed with these principles in mind: develop a budget that is as close to a zero increase as possible; maintain the services citizens expect within a tax bill citizens can afford; and develop a budget that allows Camden to continue to thrive and progress.

A few factors that account for the increases in the proposed FY 13 Budget include fuel, wages, and capital investments. While *fuel costs* are increasing, the good news is that the Town has undertaken several energy conservation projects which are helping to reduce fuel consumption. The budget includes a 3% *salary increase* for union and non-union employees. The labor contract with Police Officers has a 3% wage increase in FY13. The budget increases funding for capital improvements to reinvest in streets and sidewalks. With 38 miles of roads and 12 miles of sidewalks to maintain, we need to make a

concerted effort to fund improvements to these important municipal assets.

**General Government:** This section of the budget covers the services provided primarily by the staff in the Town Office and the Opera House: the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, licensing and permits, planning and code enforcement, economic development, Finance, and Town administration.

Last year several staff changes were made: the Assessor's Agent's hours were reduced to three-quarters time, we added a full time Economic Development Director, and the part-time Opera House Manager position became full-time. These changes have all had positive results for the Town. We have saved money on the Assessors Agent's salary while still ensuring that he completes the work and maintains our high standards for customer service. Having a full-time Economic Development Director has made it possible for the Town to successfully apply for and receive grant funds, complete the Downtown Master Plan, and assist businesses with business plans and development. As a full-time position, the Opera House Manager has been able to increase programming and revenues.

**Public Safety:** The Public Safety budget includes the Police Department, Fire Department, the Public Safety Building, Knox County Dispatch, as well as the cost of fire hydrants and street lights. The proposed budget funds the current level of personnel in both the Police and Fire Department. Two changes of note: the **Police Department** budget includes funds to create a *detective position*. This would be accomplished without adding to the number of officers. Chief Gagne reassigned one of the current officers to work as a detective at his current rate of pay (not at a detective's rate of pay) as a test. The Chief reports it has been a very successful. The **Fire Department** has made a concerted effort to increase training and professional development for the firefighters, and perform community outreach and education. When a fire or other emergency occurs which needs the Fire Department to respond, time is of

the essence. This budget includes funding for a software program that will improve our ability to contact firefighters and have them respond to emergencies. Chief Farley has been testing this program called "I am responding" with good results.

**Highways, Streets, and Bridges.** This portion of the budget covers the Public Works Department. Increases in this budget are due to the *increased cost of materials and fuel*, and the need to invest in *infrastructure repair and improvements*. In addition to maintenance work, projects planned for next year include the completion of the bridge and drainage work on Molyneaux Road and Belmont Avenue. This budget also funds winter maintenance. As we have experienced this year, the weather can be unpredictable. The Town's *Winter Maintenance Reserve Fund* has allowed the Town to be more conservative with funding winter operations, which has helped to keep winter maintenance funding more consistent.

**Health & Welfare.** This portion of the budget funds community organizations and non-profit agencies which provide healthcare and social services to Camden residents. The Provider Agencies and Community Services are funded mostly at prior year's levels. The exception is *Camden First Aid*, which requested \$20,000 which is a more realistic amount based on the true cost of services provided to Camden residents. Camden First Aid is the Town's designated Emergency Medical Services provider and ambulance service.

**Leisure Services:** In recognition of the economic times we are in, the Trustees of the *Camden Public Library* requested a budget that is the same amount they received in FY12. The *Camden Harbor* expenditures are expected to be fully funded from harbor fees. The *Recreation and Parks* budget maintains current services. Costs for full time staff who work for the Parks and the Recreation Department are charged to the Snow Bowl during the winter season. Historically the General Fund has made a contribution to the *Snow Bowl* for the Toboggan Nationals. Because the winter of 2010-11 was so successful, the Town

did not allocate any money from the General Fund to the Snow Bowl. This year, due to the mild winter and lack of snow, the budget does include a \$15,000 contribution to the Snow Bowl. The *Dam budget* covers Camden's share of repairs and maintenance to the Montgomery Dam and Seabright Dam. The cost of repairs to the East and West Megunticook dams are shared by Camden (2/3) and Lincolnton (1/3).

The Parks staff takes care of all Town cemeteries and *Harbor Park*. The cost of the Harbor Park mowing is paid for by the Library. The Trustees of the *Cemetery Association* oversee the Oak Hill and Mountain View Cemeteries. The maintenance budget is completely paid for with funds generated by the cemeteries and are shown as revenue to the General Fund. The cemeteries are funded at the same level as the prior year.

**Debt, Capital, and Contingency.** This portion of the budget covers funding for the Town's facilities, infrastructure, and equipment through leases, bond issues, or reserve funds that are specifically established to pay for capital projects. The Debt Service payments are reported as principal payments and interest owed. Several debt obligations are scheduled to be paid off in FY 12. This made it possible to consider purchasing a *new fire truck* without adding significantly to the Town's overall indebtedness. Last November the voters approved the purchase of a fire truck. The first payment is due December 2012.

The *Capital Reserve* accounts set aside funds for specific capital projects. This is a sound financial management practice which allows the Town to minimize the need to borrow, while allowing the Town to reinvest in existing infrastructure and equipment while stabilizing the impact on the budget.

Included in Capital Improvements is funding for the *Downtown Master Plan*. Two years ago, the Town Meeting voted to establish a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District for the Downtown. The funds generated in the Downtown TIF District are intended to fund projects that will improve downtown infrastructure and enhance business opportunities in the Downtown. The Budget Committee did not support using the Downtown Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funds to start

implementing the Downtown Master Plan. At the time of the Budget Committee's vote, the Downtown Master Plan had not been finalized. The Budget Committee did not support funding projects that were not definite and which they had not seen. The Select Board voted to appropriate \$25,000 from the Downtown TIF fund to have money set aside to implement the Downtown Master Plan. These funds can be used as matching funds for a downtown grant, or for other projects approved in the Downtown Tax Increment Finance program adopted by the voters in 2010.

**Article 12:** This Article relates to the State law known as *LD 1* which limits growth in the municipal portion of the tax commitment (excluding school and county costs). The limit is established according to the state formula based on the average real personal income growth (this year it is 1.43%) to the property growth factor (this is derived by comparing the municipality's new value to total value which is .77%). To calculate the limitations for this year these factors are applied to the FY12 tax commitment using the FY11 assessment information. Camden's LD 1 spending limitation growth has been calculated to be \$89,879. The budget recommended by the Budget Committee as well as by the Select Board falls within the LD 1 guidelines. This limit can be exceeded if approved by the Town Meeting.

**Articles 13 through 15** call for the election of officials to the **Pascal Fund Trust**, the **Budget Committee**, and the **Budget Nominating Committee**. All candidates are nominated from the floor.

**Board of Trustees of the W. H. Pascal Fund:** Tom Karod's term is expiring. *Christopher Hardy* has been suggested to serve the 3-year term.

**Budget Committee:** Nine members have terms which are expiring. *The Budget Nominating Committee has nominated the following 6 to serve 3-year terms* expiring in 2015: Edward Collins, Orman Goodwin, Karen Grove, Morgan Laidlaw, John Lewis, and Ann Williamson.

The **Budget Committee** has suggested 1 member to serve a *2-year term* to the Budget Committee which will expire in 2014: *Graham Phaup*.

**Budget Committee Nominating Committee:** There are opening for 3 regular members to serve on the Budget Nominating Committee and openings for 2 alternate members. Names suggested to serve next fiscal year are: Kristin Bifulco, Anita Brosius-Scott, Dave Nazaroff, and Cheryl Oliveri-Daly (Alternate)

**For Reference:**

FY 12 Taxable Value:	\$1,103,355,882
Mil rate	\$13.47 per thousand
of assessed value	
Municipal Portion	27% or
\$4.00/thousand	

The tax on each \$100,000 of property value is \$1,347

For FY 13. if we assume a net taxable value of \$1,102,356,780, the following applies

	<u>Taxes raised</u>	<u>Tax on \$100,000 value</u>
1 cent on the tax rate:	\$ 11,020	\$ 1.00
\$1.00 on the tax rate	\$1,102,000	\$100.00

We hope this information is helpful as you prepare for the Town Meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Town Manager Pat Finnigan at [pfinnigan@camdenmaine.gov](mailto:pfinnigan@camdenmaine.gov) or 236-3353.



*[www.camdenmaine.gov](http://www.camdenmaine.gov)*